



A
SEASONABLE
SERMON

PREACH'D
JANUARY 26. 1689.

And Publish'd for the
COMMON BENEFIT
OF ALL
True English Men.

By J. G. D. D.

L O N D O N,

Printed by *S. Roycroft*, for *R. Clavell* at the *Peacock*
at the West-end of *S. Pauls*. 1690.

SEASONABLE
SERMON

NEW YORK, 20. 1889.

COMMON BENEFIT

THE COMMON BENEFIT

R. A. G. D. D.

Published by the
Common Benefit Society

NUMB. XI. Ver. 4, 5, 6.

And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting ; and the Children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us Flesh to eat ? We remember the Fish which we did eat in Egypt freely ; the Cucumbers, and the Melons, and the Leeks, and the Onions, and the Garlick. But now our Soul is dried away, there is nothing at all but this Manna before our Eyes.

THis Book of *Numbers*, besides a Muster-Roll of the several Tribes and Families of *Israel*, which it affords us in the former part (and from whence it hath its Name) presents us also with a Journal of the Motions of that mighty Host, or an History

History of the most remarkable Passages of their Forty years Travel through the Wilderness towards *Canaan*. And in the Course of this History sets before our Eyes a wonderful Scene of miraculous Providences on the one hand, and as strange and frequent Instances of human Folly and Frailty on the other. On Gods part, a display of infinite Power, Wisdom, Goodness and Patience : And on the part of the People, prodigious Infidelity, Stubbornness, Peevishness, and Ingratitude. God Almighty had seen their Affliction in *Egypt*, and had heard their Groanings, and by a powerful Hand had rescued them from an horrible Slavery under an unrelenting Tyrant; and by the gentle Conduct of *Moses*, was leading them into possession of the good Land he had promised them. But they instead of Thankfulness for so great a Deliverance, are perpetually quarrelling with his Instruments or his Methods, or tempting and affronting his Divine Majesty; and which was most Ingrateful of all, are continually upbraiding him with the remembrance of the
good

good Things they had forgone in Egypt.

In particular, sometimes they want Water, and then all Gods Miracles of Power and Providence are forgotten; There is no help, *but they must all be Famished in the Wilderiness.* Another time they want Bread, and then God and Moses are Nosed with Egypt again, *Were there no Graves in Egypt, but we must be brought hither to be Starved?* Well, God gives them Bread to the full, *Manna*, Bread from Heaven, Angels-Bread: But this will not serve the turn neither, they must have Flesh too, and that not so much for necessity, as *Capriciously* to try Gods Power: *Can God prepare a Table also in the Wilderiness?* If not, they are presently for Egypt again: So in the Text, *the mixt Multitude fell a Lusting, and the Children of Israel wept, and said, Who shall give us Flesh to Eat? We remember the Cucumbers, and Melons, and Onions, and Garlick, &c.*

In which passage of the Scripture, I observe these Four things :

1. The peculiar circumstances of this Mutiny

Mutiny or Murmuring.

2. The Beginners or Ringleaders of this Disorder.
3. The quick and general Infection of this Mischief.
4. Gods Resentment of their Carriage.

Which when I have opened, it will be easie to make Application of all to our own Case.

(1) I begin with the First, *The Circumstances and Aggravations of this Murmuring*; and amongst them these Four are most remarkable, viz.

First, The Time of it. It was now but about a Year and two Months (as Divines compute) from their deliverance out of *Egypt*, and yet so quickly could they forget their own Sufferings and Gods Wonders; And nothing runs in their Thoughts, but the Fish, the Onions, and Garlick, &c. which they had there: A strange Levity and Inconstancy of Mind this! Had it been an Age or two after, one would not have so much wondered, that when Time (which effaces all things) had worn out the Remembrance of their

Hard-

Hardships, their other Entertainments, there might have been reflected on, with some gust and delight; but so quickly to forget God and themselves too, argued them to be a true *Mobile*.

And, Secondly, their Wantonness and Curiosity, was no less remarkable, than their Levity and Inconstancy. They had Bread to the full, which might very well have satisfied them in a Wilderness; and especially when they were going to *Canaan*, a Land flowing with Milk and Honey, they might well have dispensed with some tolerable Inconveniences in the Way; tolerable Accommodations might serve the turn in a Wilderness. But they had not only Bread enough, but delicious Bread, *Manna*; however that will not do, they must have Flesh too; they made a pish at *Manna*; *Nothing but this Manna*, say they.

Thirdly, There was Insolence, as well as Wantonness and Curiosity in the case; it was Flesh they desired, not so much for their Hunger, as for their Lust. They must have their will, or else to *Egypt* again; and it was more their design to tempt God, than to be

gratified themselves. They must prescribe to God what Miracles he shall do for them; they must have arbitrary Proofs of his Omnipotency, *Can God prepare a Table in the Wilderness?* If he will not work Miracles, what and when they think good, they will follow him no further, but to *Egypt* again.

Lastly, There was a prophane Spirit in all this, a plain contempt of God and Religion. God had asserted them to be his own People; had newly given them Laws, which it would have been both their Wisdom and Happiness to walk in. He intended to keep them a while in the Wilderness, to disuse them from the Superstitions of *Egypt*, and to train them by degrees into the Habits and Customs of the True Religion; and then shortly to place them in their own Land, under their own Laws and Princes, and far from any temptation of Apostasie from him and them; but they meditated a Relapse, they were indifferent as to this business of God and Religion; they would run the venture and hazard of Idolatry, and defiling their Consciences with the Follies of *Egypt*, rather than want the *Onions* and *Garlick*.

So

So we see a long time after this, in the Prophet *Isaiah's* Time, *Isa. 30. 1, 2, 3, 4.* They talk to go down to Egypt, and have not inquired at my Mouth; their Princes were at Zoan, and Embassadors came to Hanes, &c. q. d. They were negotiating a Peace between Me and the Gods of Egypt; they were contriving a Concordat between the true Religion and Idolatry; they would not stick out upon point of Religion, so they might accommodate their Secular ends.

Thus much for Matter of Fact it self.

(2.) In the second place, I observe in the Text, the Beginners or Ring-leaders of this Sedition, *A mixed Multitude*: Who they were we may guess by *Exod. 12. 38.* when the Children of *Israel* came up out of *Egypt*, it is said, *A mixed Multitude came along with them*; that is, such as were not of the Race of the *Jews*, nor of any one Nation, Tribe or Family; but a *Colluvies* of several Nations, or perhaps a Bastard brood, part *Jew* and part *Egyptian*, but of no certain Principles; such as had their God and Religion to chuse, and had only the fancy to follow the Fortune of the *Israelites* in this great and famous Expedition, in hopes to mend their own.

This *Vulgus*, this Rabble begins the Mutiny (as they are always wont to do) and such are dangerous Incendiaries in all Societies; they have not only no Honour, nor Principles, nor Conscience, but no Prudence, no Modesty, no Restraint; there is no Handle to take hold of them by, to govern and manage them. Of these the Historian observes, *Inest omni populo malignum quiddam & querulum in Imperantes*; the Populacy, or Rabble, is always a tumultuous ungoverned Beast. They are of no Value, of no Industry, nor Capacity, but to do Mischief; *Ignavus quisquis seditiosus*; these are usually the first in at every thing, and first out; that first dishonour a good Enterprize by Abetting it, and then betray it by Revolting from it.

(3.) Thirdly, I observe in the Text, the quick and general spreading and infection of this seditious Murmuring Humor; the *mixed Multitude sell a Lustig*, and presently all *Israel* put Finger in the Eye, and weep for the Entertainments of *Egypt*; like Fire, though it begin in a little contemptible Spark, it quickly diffuses it self, and bears down

down all before it, I sets all in a combu-

Example, especially of Evil, is too taking amongst the generality of Mankind, *Pecorum ritu sequimur antecedentium gregem, non qua eundem est, sed qua itur*; as Cato observes of Sheep; It is easier to drive a multitude of them, than a few; get but some to go, and all the rest will follow.

It is very unreasonable in itself, and therefore may seem strange, that evil Example should be more prevalent than good; but Experience leaves us without doubt, that so it is for Matter of Fact, and especially in the case of Mutiny or Sedition. Whilst there are (as there ever will be) a teachy, querulous, discontented People, so long there will never want some Pretence or other for Disturbance. Publick Affairs can never be conducted with that Even-hand, but there will be some Grievance or other to such over-tender and captious People; and the Passionate representing of these will expose the Authority; even of Moses himself, and weaken the Hearts and Hands of well-meaning People. But, now

Fourthly

Fourthly, and Lastly, I observe Gods resentment of this matter, v. 1. of this chapter; And when the People complained, it displeased the Lord; and the Lord heard it, and his Anger was kindled; and the Fire of the Lord burnt among them, and Consumed them that were in the uttermost part of the Camp. And again, v. 33. of this Chapter, though God gratified their Humor; yet, while the Flesh was between their Teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the People, and he smote them with a very great Plague: and beyond all this, in Chap. 14. v. 23. he takes up a resolution, and solemnly Swears, That not a Man of these, that had thus provoked him by their Murmurings, should enter into the good Land he had Sworn unto their Fathers, to give them.

And thus, I have, (as much as was sufficient to my purpose) open'd the Letter or History of my Text; Let us now see how far this will concern our selves. And I doubt, it will be found a very easy matter to draw a Parallel, in the Sin and Folly of this present Generation; and I pray God, We be not in some measure parallel in the Judgment.

It cannot be denied, that we have lately had a signal Deliverance from a Slavery, little inferiour to that of *Egypt*; and though there hath not appeared altogether so much of Miracles in the effecting it, yet there have been most signal Instances of the Divine Hand in bringing it about, particularly in infatuating the Councils, cowing the Spirits, baffling the Powers, and dissolving all the Forces that were ready to obstruct our Deliverance.

And now, that we escaped the House of Bondage, and come into some straits in our Passage through the Wilderness, towards a state of Rest and Settlement, we fall a Murmuring, and a thousand little Scruples and Jealousies run in our Heads, which were never thought of (or thought scorn of) before; yet now are able to make us wish, we had never set out from *Egypt*.

Some are affrighted with the Difficulties before us, and dream of *Gyants* and *Anakims*, as if the Promised Land was to be obtained without conflict; or, as if the God that Miraculously delivered us out of *Egypt*, was not able to carry us through to *Canaan*.

Some

Some false Spies misrepresent the good Land, as if it was not worth the contending for; and that our Religion, Laws and Liberties, would not quit the cost.

Some suspect Religion and Reformation it self, as if it would be too strict for them; and therefore their Mouths water after the Onions and Garlick they left behind them. *Others* complain of the Intermision of Trade; some of the Taxes and Burdens.

One sort Murmurs, That they are not preferred to their Merits; and that others are advanced above their Merits. *Another sort* repines, That their Party is not encouraged enough, and that some other Party hath too much of the Publick Countenance; and all these look towards Egypt again.

(*And* to inflame this Reckoning, we want not a mixed Multitude amongst us: From Abroad, French Agents and Popish Embassies; at Home, all Discontented persons, that love to fish in troubled Waters; and those whose Guilt renders them Jealous of a Settlement; all half Protestants and Papists in Masquerade, as also Men of no Religion, but whose Interest is all the Conscience they have;

have, and together with these, some who though perhaps they cannot digest downright Popery; yet the *Manna* of Reformation is too thin a Diet for their gross Stomachs; but Onions and Garlic, a good hautgust of Superstition will relish well with them: All these begin the Murmuring, and are ready to set the Multitude agog for Egypt.

Upon the whole Matter, the Parallel is but too easy and obvious, between our condition and that of the *Israelites* hitherto. Now therefore it is time to take care, that it go on no further, lest we watch them in the Mischief and Punishment, as we seem to have done in the Folly.

In order to the prevention of which deplorable Calamity, I have a few Things upon this Occasion, to offer to the Consideration of all true English Men, Lovers of their Country, and of the Protestant Religion: And though I know, I now shall be heard by few of those that are concern'd in the Advice, and perhaps by none of those that have most need of it; yet I will make use of this Opportunity, to deliver my self with all sincerity

cerity in the case, to the intent, that you
 that hear me, may Report it to others of
 your Acquaintance; and by that means
 (and the Blessing of God upon it) some check
 may be given to that Murmuring Spirit,
 that is begun amongst us.

The sum of what I have to say, will be
 comprized in these three Particulars :

First, That we will be intreated to reflect
 back a little, and to consider what our Con-
 dition was before we came into this Wil-
 derness, and fell under the present Tempta-
 tions to Discontent.

Secondly, That we will also look Impar-
 tially about us, and view our present Con-
 dition, to the end that we may make the
 better Judgment; Whether even now in the
 general, and for the main, we have not
 those Advantages which may countervail
 the objected Straits and Inconveniences ?

Thirdly, That we will look forward, and
 consider as discreet Men, what is likely to
 be the effect of our Murmuring, and of
 thinking of returning back to Egypt.

It will not, I presume, seem strange to
 you, (who know me well) that I should

(at this time especially) make use of this Freedom, since I am persuaded your own Thoughts and Experience of me, will acquit me from all suspicion of Partiality towards any Person or Party of Men whatsoever, in regard you are in some measure aware, That as I have neither been personally disoblged by the former Times or Government; so neither have I been (nor am I capable of being) bribed or biassed by any Obligation from the present.

Therefore with the sincerity and good-Will of an *English Man* towards his Native Country, and as a resolv'd Protestant for the Honour or Interest of that Excellent Religion, I go on with my Intentions. And,

First, I earnestly beseech all my Brethren and Country-men, That before they suffer themselves to be tempted to murmur and repine at the Present state of things, they will reflect upon the Condition of our Affairs before this Revolution, and what it was likely to have come to, had it not pleased the Divine Providence to interrupt the course of Things.

And the Time is not so long since, but that we may easily remember We were Miserable enough; nor were the Designs so obscure, or the Methods so intricate, but we might easily foresee, that we should quickly have been intolerably Unhappy, at that rate of Proceeding.

Do we not know, That all our Laws (contrived by the Wisdom, and defended by the Prowess of our Ancestors) were all cut off at one Blow by a *Dispensing Power*.

Were not all, or at least most of the *Charters* in *England* (the Glory and Ensign of Honour to all the Cities and Great Societies of the Nation) confirmed by all former Princes, owned by the Laws, and establish'd by Ancient Custom, damned and dissolved at once?

Was not the sacred Right of Property invaded, and Freeholds taken away (not only from Private Persons, but from the Noblest Societies) without form or colour of Law?

Were not all our Lives at Mercy, and had we not several dreadful Instances of Eminent Men violently hurried out of the World,

And whether even our Lives themselves were not held at Mercy, one would be tempted shrewdly to suspect, who reflected upon the dreadful Instances of several Eminent Persons hurried out of the World, some one way, and some another.

In a word, Were not Parliaments (the only conservative of our Constitution, and redress of our Grievances) either disused, as inconsistent with the Designs in hand; or endeavoured to be corrupted, fore-stalled, or the freedom of chusing them designed by new and unheard of Methods, to be for ever destroyed?

These things are too fresh in our Memories to need Repetition, too plain to be denied, and too great in themselves to be aggravated; but,

Hæc olim meminisse juvabit—

And as for that great Affair of Religion (dearer to all true *Englishmen* than their very Lives) the prospect thereof was in those Times very melancholy, when a Design was not only form'd, but begun to be put in execution, of laying a *Yoke* upon our Necks, which neither we nor our Forefathers were able to bear. And in pursuance hereof, not only mercenary Pens were employed to expose and ridicule *Protestantism* in general; but Care was taken to blow up, inflame and perpetuate the Divisions amongst *Protestants*; partly by odious Names of distinction, and partly by exasperating their Minds one against another, as that in conclusion all of them might be destroyed with the less pity or scandal.

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It is true, the Church of *England* was all this while complemented, but never the securer from destruction: Witness the Imprisoning, and severe treatment of 7 excellent Bishops at once, for but daring to understand the Project, and humbly interposing their Advice; and the suspending another excellent Person of that Order, only for being too good a Man for so bad times: Witness also the scorn cast upon the whole Body of the Clergy, in imposing a Declaration, to be read by them in all their Churches; wherein (according to the mannerly Expression of that time) *They should* (not only) *have been compell'd to eat their own Dung*; but in truth, to be *Felo de se*, and to have cut their own Throats.

To say no more therefore, our Condition was not unlike that of *Israel* in *Egypt*; We were vexed, oppressed, undermined, weakned, treated as Slaves; and to assure and perpetuate our Slavery, foreign Forces were brought in, and more were intended to be brought in, to Nail our Ears to the Door-Posts for ever.

Or, if all this be not sufficient to make us sensible of the Condition we were then in, or going into, let us look upon the State of *France*, and especially of the Poor *Protestants* there; for that was designed to be a Pattern and Precedent for Us.

By All which together (the Particulars whereof I have rather intimated than represented) we see our Ill state then, and that

that we had good cause to get out of Egypt as soon as we could, whatever beset us in the Wilderness. Which leads me to the Second thing I designed to speak to, viz.

Secondly, That we will be intreated impartially to consider, Whether our present Condition is not more tolerable, than that we have escaped? and, Whether we have any just Provocation from the present Inconveniences, to Murmur and meditate a Revolt? It is true, we are yet but in a Wilderness, and there in want of many things; and we are beset with many difficulties and dangers, and perhaps too, have a long Journey (to Canaan) to a compleat Settlement; and especially there is the more likelyhood of that, if we be Peevish, and obstruct the Way to our own Happiness. However, take Things as they are, and at worst we may have many things to oblige us to be thankful for our present Condition, and none to make us repent of the Change.

In the first place, we have a KING and a QUEEN, both of our own Religion; a Felicity we have not for many years had experience of, and for want of which, the

the State of Protestantism hath been fluctuating and uncertain, and could never make any good progress: A Prince and Princess we have now, whose Interest conspires with their Education and Choice; and who abandon themselves, if they grow cold, or indifferent in the Protestant Religion. Now of what Consequence this One thing is, if we had not learnt by our former Experience, common Prudence would instruct us; since it cannot be expected, but that a Prince of another Religion, if he have any Zeal for it, will be sure secretly to undermine that which is Rival to his own Persuasion, if he have not the Power or the Courage openly to assault and suppress it: Whereas now (by the Blessing of GOD) we have that comfortable Prophecy accomplish'd of a King and Queen, *Nursing Father and Mother to this Church*: We enjoy our Religion with all the Accommodations of it as fully, and as securely as our Hearts can wish, and not only so, but *Piety and Vertue* lifts up its Head, and all *Prophaness* which grew Rampant heretofore, is in a great measure put out

out of Countenance: Nor ought it to trouble us, that some Men (whose particular Persuasions in Religion we are not well satisfied with) should enjoy some share of Advantage by this Revolution, since it is not only what we Vowed to God, and promised to them in our Adversity; but is that which cannot be denied them consistently with our own Safety.

Then for our Laws, They have recovered their just Vigour and Authority, great Care being taken, to provide excellent Judges and Magistrates for the Execution of them; and so our Lives, and all our Rights and Properties are as secure as can be expected under any human Constitution: And to all this, We are under a Government so easie and gentle, that we have nothing to object, unless it be that it is so very benign, that it encourages some evil-Natur'd Men, to presume and to contemn it.

It is true, notwithstanding all this, that there are at present great Burdens and Taxes upon us; but as they are no other than what are absolutely necessary for our Preservation, nor other than are voluntarily

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rily assented to by our selves, being no otherwise imposed than by our Representatives in Parliament; so it is greatly to be hoped (by the Blessing of GOD) they will not continue long upon us. So that upon the whole, our present Condition is very tolerable *for a Wilderiness*, and we have no cause to murmur, or to talk of returning back to *Egypt*. But,

Thirdly and Lastly, Let us (before we indulge our selves in a discontented, complaining Humor) forecast with our selves, what are likely to be the effects and consequences of Murmuring, and they can be no better, nor other, than such as these following; *viz.*

First, Forasmuch as this Womanish humor of Murmuring and Complaining is both too weak in it self, and also comes too late to reverse the state of Affairs; it can effect nothing, but mischief to the Murmurers themselves; We are (GOD be thanked) so far out of *Egypt*, that some Mens Fancy and Humor will not be able to carry us back thither again. The King in Possession is too sensible of his own Strength,

Strength, and of the Hearts of his People, to be Murmured out of his Throne: The Nobility and Great Men are too far engaged to think of returning: The Body of the People have too quick a Sense of the Liberty and Advantages they have under this Government, to be induced to forego All for a Notion, or a Complement, or to save the Longing of some Sickly People.

So that this way will attain, no End, mend no Matter, ease no Burden, discharge no Tax; but contrary wise, increase and continue the Burdens of the Nation. Besides, that at this rate we are Constant to nothing; unworthy of Deliverance; ingrateful to God and Man; false to our selves, and to our real interest; *Et quid frustra turpes esse volumus.*

Secondly, But suppose the contagion of this Murmuring Humor should take through the Nation, (which God forbid) why then, as Relapses are said to be more fatal than the Diseases themselves; so would our Condition be more miserable than ever: We shall then return to Egypt with a Vengeance, not only to the Onions

and Garlick, (which perhaps we could fancy) I mean, not only to the Idolatries, and superstitions, and Follies; but to the Brick-kilns and Iron Furnaces; nay, to the Plague of Lice and Caterpillars; to Darknes that may be felt; to absolute slavery of Body and Mind: In a word, to all the dismal Effects of *French Insolence*, and *Papish Revenge*.

Nor will it help us, or make any discrimination in our Case, to pretend, That we were the first that mentioned a Retreat, and that talked of going back again; that we boggled at the Design, and were not thoroughly satisfied with the Revolution; but why did you hearken to *Moses* at all? why did you break off your Fetters? and wherefore did you once look towards *Canaan*? Thus we shall perish with shame and confusion to our selves, without pity from Spectators, and with scorn from our Enemies.

Thirdly, Nor will the Mischiefs end there neither; but the Effects of it will reach over all the Protestant World, and destroy all the Measures taken for the preservation

of

of that excellent Religion: Forasmuch as all of that denomination, not only in *Ireland*, and in the *Low Countries*; but *Germany*, *France*, &c. are imbarqu'd in the same Bottom with us, and consequently must sink or swim as we do. All their Eyes are upon us; next under God, they depend upon Us, as the principal support of that Profession: If we fail them, they are all lost; if we stand to it, they will take heart, and (by the Blessing of God) recover such Head, as probably never to be suppress again.

And now is the Opportunity of making our utmost Effort in Conjunction; since we can never (without Miracles) hope for such an happy Juncture again, as now God hath presented us with, when all the Popish Princes are so deeply engaged in a War against *France*; and seem well contented, that we should assert our own Interests, whilst in so doing we assist them in humbling the Great *Leviathan*, who is otherwise ready to swallow up both.

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Wherefore then, when such a Prize is put into our Hands, should we not have the Hearts to make use of it? Why should we complain of Little things, and take Pet at Punctilio's; and soften our Spirits, and make feeble our Hands, by Murmuring and Repining; and so abandon both our Selves, our Brethren and Friends in such an Opportunity?

To all which add in the Fourth and Last place, Let us consider the Example before us in the Text, and be really afraid (as there is great Reason for it,) lest if we indulge this Murmuring Humor) GOD should resolve that none of us *shall enter into his Rest*; I mean, That we shall never see those happy and glorious Times of Religion, which Good Men expect in these latter Days, according to the Predictions of Holy Scripture.

No question of it, *Antichrist* must down, and the true Spirit of the Gospel shall be advanced gloriously before the End of the World. This shall as certainly come to pass, as it was certain the Posterity of *Israel* should possess the Land of *Canaan*.

But

But, if we for our parts be Faint-hearted, and Peevish and Unbelieving, God's Promise shall be accomplish'd; but we shall have no share, nor comfort in it.

To conclude therefore, Let us stand steadfast in our Minds; *Rubiconem transistis*, you have left *Egypt*, meditate not a Revolt thither again; we are Imbarqu'd, and must go on or perish. Put on the Spirits of *English Men*, and the Zeal of *True Protestants*; stick not in the *Wilderness*, but resolve for *Canaan*.

Give me leave to press this upon you, as the Apostle doth on the *Corinthians*; in the first Epistle, Chap. 10. he begins thus; Brethren, I would not have you ignorant, ^{that} ~~all~~ our Fathers were under the Cloud, and passed through the Sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the Cloud and in the Sea, and did all eat the same Spiritual Meat: But with many of them GOD was not well-pleased, for they were overthrown in the *Wilderness*.

And then Ver. 6. Now these things were our Examples, to the intent that we should not Lust after Evil things, as they also Lusted; neither be ye Idolaters, as were some of them; neither let